

Not to be taken from reading room for one week.

As the week drew to a close, the attorneys in the Evin Lappas murder trial completed their selection of a jury, and then went almost immediately into a closed-court conference with Superior Judge Verne Summers - a conference that barred reporters. They later explained that they were having "a discussion about evidence and procedures."

Lappas, meanwhile, was returned to the cell in the county jail that she has occupied since she was charged with shooting her step-father last October. The dead man is Al Durney who was shot several times in the mobile home he shared with his wife - and, sometimes, Lappas - on Bishop's Barlow Lane.

Little information about the shooting, or its causes, has been officially released, but questions asked of some of the jurors implied the possibility of a sexual assault by Durney on the defendant, the mother of two.

During her stint in county jail, the 27-year-old Lappas suffered continuous seizures. And on Friday morning the local rescue unit was called again to treat another one, but she appeared in court.

And someone else appeared in the

Cont. P. 2

The Lappas trial

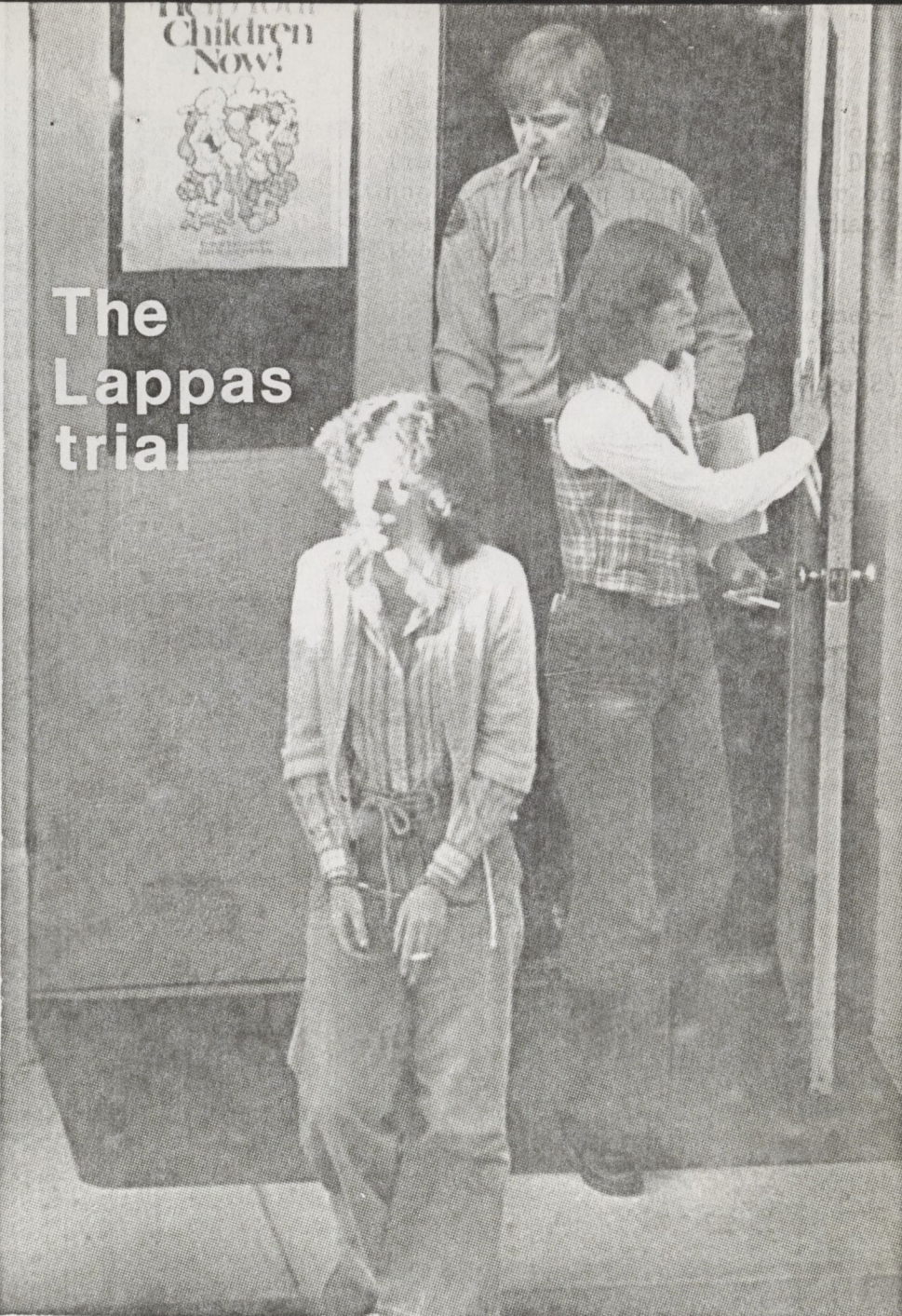


Photo: Jim Smith



SPRING!

A photo report by Jim Smith

P. 14

THE Inyo County News-Letter

60¢

INDEPENDENCE CAL. 93526

March 10, 1979

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NEWS BRIEFS

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The COUNTY

NEW WATER BILLS IN JUNE - OR MAYBE OCTOBER; NO MORE PARK FEES; PREDATORS OVER THE BRIDGE TO NEGIT; AND CAFE OWNERS ASK: BIG MAC, ARE YOU REALLY DOING IT ALL FOR US?

Car insurance: It may go up.



If "redlining" is outlawed, Inyo will pay more. P. 3

THAT MANY OF THE COUNTY'S RESIDENTS will be paying much higher water bills is a fact well-known though not eagerly accepted. The greater problem now is when?

With the arrival of what appears to be spring, some Inyoans are planning gardens, or would like to, and the matter of water and what it will cost is a factor of planning. The new meters are in, about as welcome as the return of freezing weather might be, but DWP has so far been less than clear on when the bills will come and what they will amount to.

What's happening?

At Los Angeles, DWP'S general manager, Paul Lane, said that

(See NEWS BRIEFS, Page 2)



LAPPAS TRIAL, Continued

courtroom - apparently a new addition to the defense team. She is Carla Caruso, 26, who says she recently passed the California Bar exam, but is not yet sworn as an "attorney." She last resided in Alaska, but lives now with her parents in Bishop. Following closely the line of silence already well-established in the case, she said "We've decided not to comment on the case until it's over. I don't want to talk about it, because it might bias the jury." Caruso declined even to name the law school she attended. Testimony was expected to get underway early this week - to answer perhaps questions long unanswered.

Lappas defense team members Dean Stout and Carla Caruso
"Following a line of silence already well-established."

Photo:
Benett Kessler

NEWS BRIEFS, Continued

"recommendations" have been made about the billing. But he also declined to state what those recommendations are and further declined to set DWP's definite billing date. He implied that the new, higher water bills may arrive as early as June, as late as autumn.

But the talk with the assistant manager was not all bad news. He said that the water and power commissioners have approved a plan to pass on some of DWP's Proposition 13 tax savings to a number of DWP renters in Inyo, with credits going to business and government lessees.

That bit of "good news" was met with guarded acceptance and even sarcasm by the Inyo Board of Supervisors last week. Asked if they were not glad to hear about the reduction, Supervisor Richard McDonald replied caustically: "Ecstatic," he said. "And how much of a tax break did the DWP get?" The answer: about \$2 million worth in Inyo.

THEY FINALLY DID IT; The supervisors finally dumped - after week's of haggling over it - the county's "park fees" ordinance, a law that in recent years has collected thousands of dollars from builders and developers on the implied promise of parks for their areas. No parks sprung up anywhere, not one, and recently some of the payers of the fees raised a howl. Now the problem is what to do with those fees already collected? The fund amounts to about \$40,000 that was collected from developers who passed the cost on to buyers. If the money is returned, who will get it - and how much interest should be paid on it?

THE PREDATORS, coyotes, snakes - all the varmints that might go for birds and birds' eggs - are probably already stalking Negit Island at Mono Lake. The island is now no longer an "island," thanks to the drain-off of waters that once fed the huge lake, and the land-bridge from the north shore presents definite hazards for nesting gulls who fly there in the spring to create the second largest

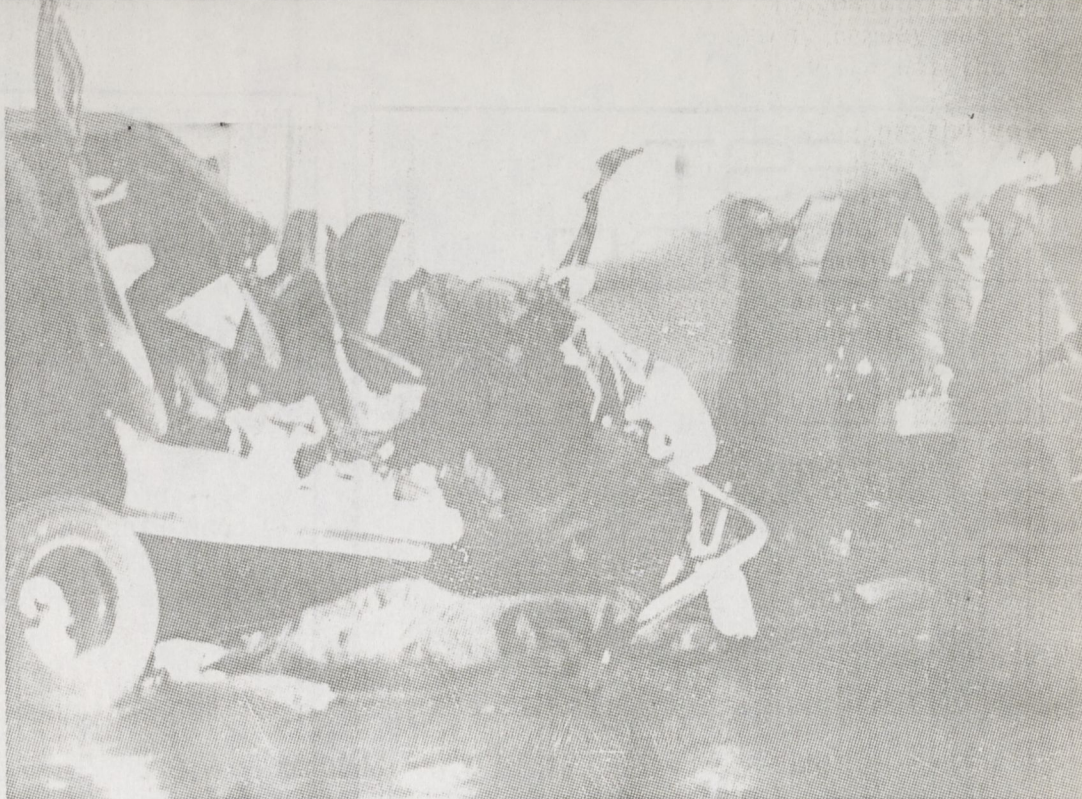
gull rookery in the world. Last year, the National Guard, working at the urging of conservation groups, blasted the land bridge that in effect turned the island into a peninsula. But the waters have receded further and the gulls nest once again in vulnerable access of the predators. And once again, they'll blast a channel - at taxpayers' expense. The real varmint in the Mono Lake struggle - the Department of Water and Power - admits that Mono Lake is "a problem," but so far has made no effort to stop diverting water to the aqueduct. DWP has shown itself sensitive to all the negative publicity, however, and was again groping for cheap solutions that would place the burden - and the blame, if possible - elsewhere. DWP's proposal now would be to let more water into Mono Lake - and make up the difference by pumping more groundwater from the Owens Valley. Such a strategy, if adopted, would pit Inyo County against Mono County with blame for the gull situation falling on Inyo if the gulls weren't saved. DWP would like nothing more - but the locals weren't buying it. Meanwhile as the political and media battle continues, water meant by nature for Mono was going as usual down the aqueduct, DWP continued its recalcitrance, the birds were nesting - and the coyotes of the four-legged kind were licking their chops.

A MacDONALD'S REPRESENTATIVE OFFERED THE COUNTY a \$100,000 worth of extended sewer system as a gift if the county would only give its okay for the Big Mac to move into Bishop. But if MacDonald's was wanting to serve up some Big Macs, some Bishop restaurant owners were trying to throw in a side of sour grapes; "The town," says one fast-food service operator, "isn't big enough to handle another food outlet." That was the word from George Hitchborn who for years has operated the Main Street "Foster's Freeze." And indeed his fears may have some justification: Word has it that the recently-opened Burger King is less than happy with its volume of customers, that receipts are considerably below Burger King's early projections. If the other restaurant owners are

(See NEWS BRIEFS on Page 13)

CAR INSURANCE IN INYO: IT MAY INCREASE BY 30%

A state move to eliminate rate "territories" would be more just for some, but more costly for others.



Fiery collision near Bishop

"Colliding with each other if not with us...They don't figure."

WHEN SOME ALREADY-IMPOVERISHED DRIVERS living in the shabbier areas of Los Angeles discovered some months ago that they were paying up to two and three times more than their more affluent brethren for car insurance, they organized, more or less, and - perhaps justifiably - set up a clamor. It then came out that California's insurers, like many of the state's other financial institutions, had been "redlining" - setting their rates according to the neighborhoods that the insurance applicants (like the loan applicants) lived in. The entire state had been carved up into "territories" or zones roughly divided by traffic accident statistics. The implication is that people living in "better" areas tend to have fewer collisions, thefts, fires, etc., than their less fortunate fellow freeway-sufferers.

In the past week another hearing was held in Los Angeles (The L.A. legislators had been crying "Unfair!") as the slightly embarrassed and sometimes angry insurance company representatives and the liberally-inclined legislators attempted to work out some sort of equitable arrangement of payments for all Californians. Contacted by a News-Letter reporter, the Department of Insurance's Jorge Sandoval was asked what effect, if any, this issue may have on Inyo County's drivers. For these, it seems, there is good news and bad news: It is more fair for all, but it costs.

Said Sandoval: "The hearings are a fact-finding mission. When the hearings are complete, the testimony will be turned over to the Department of Insurance Commissioners. If changes in the rate structuring require legislation, then that's what the D of I will do."

Those "changes" could cost Inyo drivers up to 30% more in car insurance premium payments. A proposed bill to wipe out "redlining" died last week. A similar bill is to appear in the assembly in the future. A bill that would equalize rates statewide. Under the "redlining" system extant, Inyo County enjoys one of the best "territories," called by the insurers a "Number Two" district, that is an area that pays next to the lowest. In spite of the highway mishaps here (now on the increase) caused as often as not by hard-driving southlanders, the locals are relatively "good" or "careful" drivers. Also going into

the insurance companies' computers is the fact that this area has few car thefts. The drivers in more "dangerous" areas are carrying the load for we who live in "safe" areas.

Should equalization occur - as it most likely will - rates could be based on individual driving records (A lot of people have mistakenly believed this was the system all along), and on the basis of sex (Probably another controversy looms on that one), age, marital status, etc. The actuarial records, all highly computerized, seldom lie - at least not much - and the insurance companies must go by what these indicate. Face it, some drivers in whatever neighborhood are better drivers than others, although each and every car owner sincerely feels and will sometimes angrily defend the idea that he alone and perhaps above all others is a paragon of talent and virtue behind the wheel.

Not so, say the statistics. Age, sex, and marital status (Why is a married man somehow a better risk than an unmarried one?) do indeed indicate wide variations in what is likely to happen on the highway.

As for all those high premium southern Californians who traverse Inyo's highways and byways - often colliding with each other if not with us - they do not figure in Inyo's rates. News-Letter contacted Marcus Ramsey, chief of the rate regulation division of the Department of Insurance, and it was he who reported that Inyo has the "second lowest" rating in the state. He said the southland drivers who run up our statistics are still weighed in the insurance company computers according to where they live and are insured rather than by where they run into each other.

As for the possible changes in Inyo's rates if "equalization" occurs, Ramsey was pretty definite: "Might increase is not the word," he said. "Absolutely."

And if news of higher rates or the very real probability of them raises the ire of the county's "good" drivers, they may have some small recourse: letters or calls to the Department of Insurance at Sacramento.

For all the important local and area news every day through the week, tune in to Bennett Kessler and Bob Wellman at 7:05, 8:05, 12:05, and 5:05 on KIOQ-FM 100....

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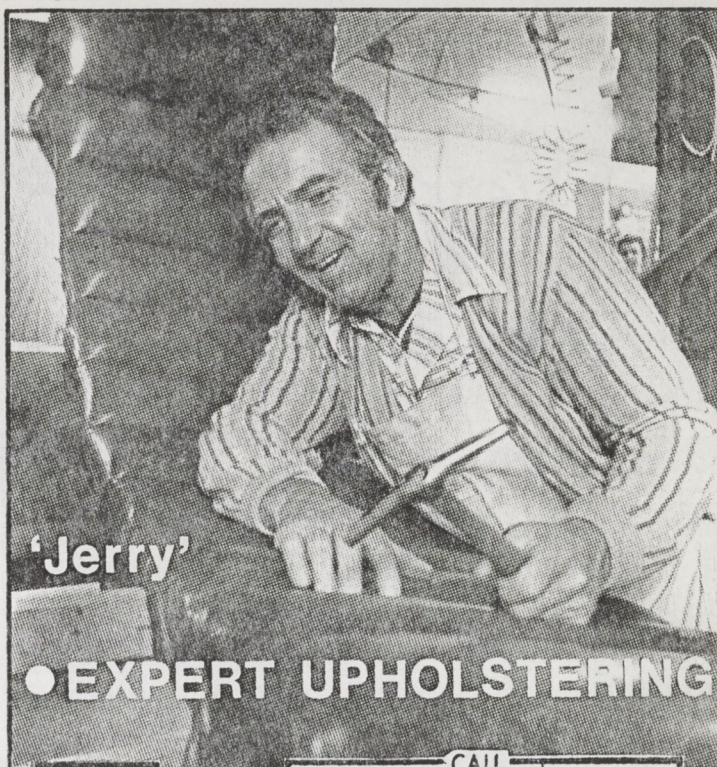
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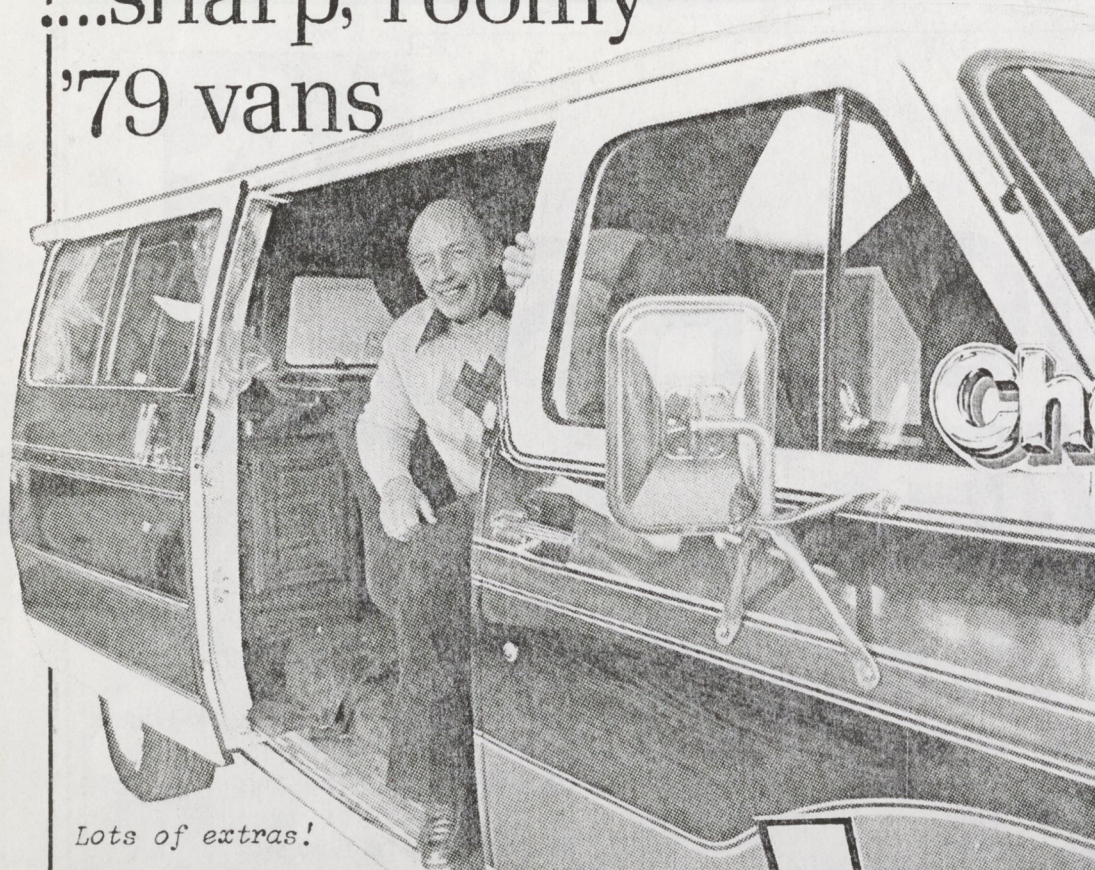
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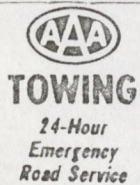
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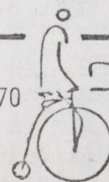
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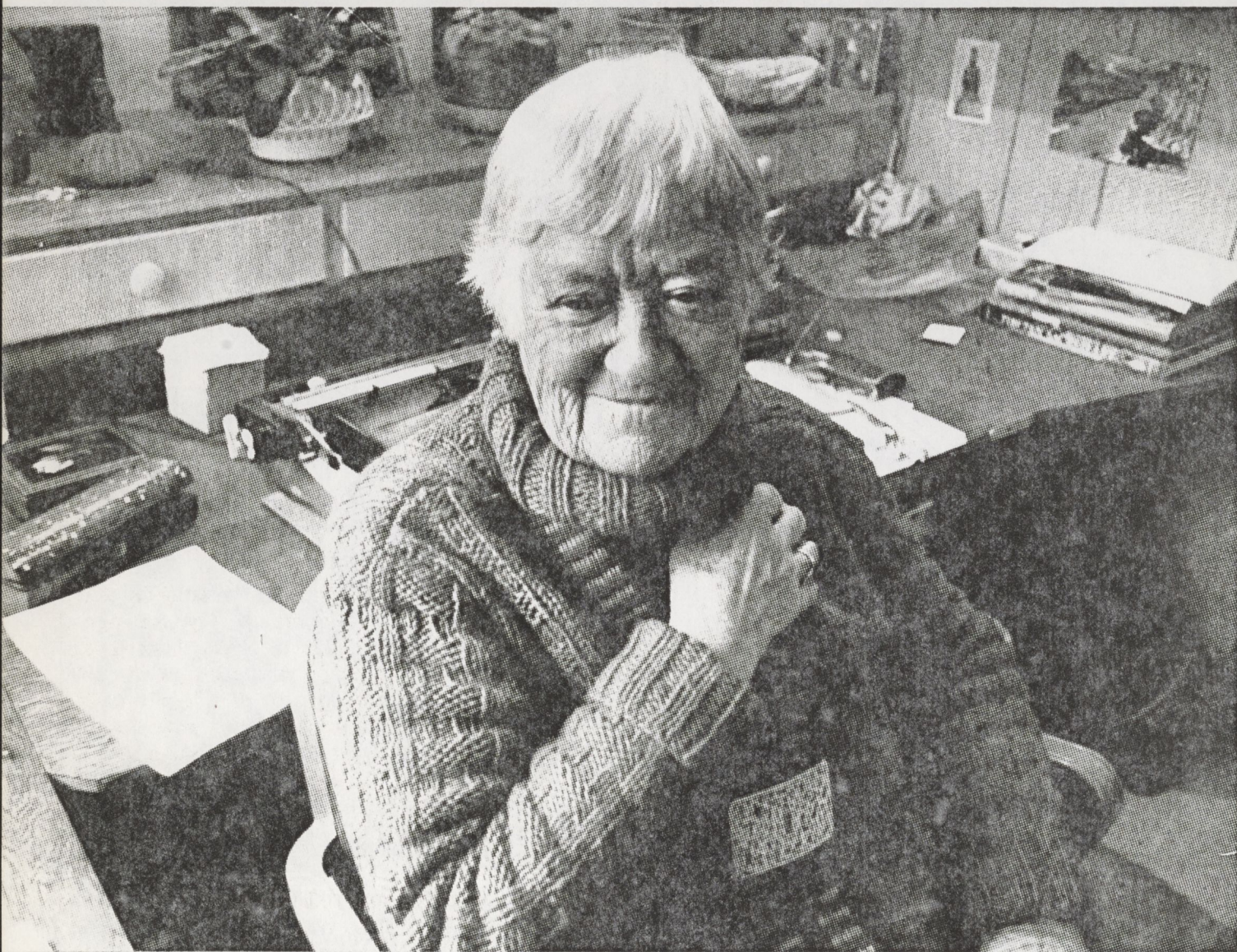
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Eaton update: From the sweats, a voice of sharing



At her Independence studio, author Evelyn Eaton talks about books and philosophy

"...like Lazarus having to go back to the office..."

NOW SHE IS 76, a prolific though not overly-famous author, and still writing. Last year when she was in the hospital, she was convinced she was going to die, but decided instead to write another book. "It was like Lazarus having to go back to the office," she said recently, before taking off in a pickup and camper for a cross-country tour of speaking engagements and book-promotion appearances. An Indian acquaintance (Apparently she has a lot of these) told her "They don't want you in the Happy Hunting Ground; you're a troublemaker."

So anyway she wrote the book: *I Send A Voice*. It concerns Indian mysticism.

"Since 1965, I've looked into the Indian way," she says. She herself is clearly an "Anglo," but she explains "I wanted to create a bridge of understanding between people and races in my book - to have people share first-hand experiences." In that effort, she has succeeded, more or less, since her first-published book, a work of poetry, when she was 19. Actually, her work was published before even that - a poem published at eight years old. "Our cook sent my poem to the Montreal Star, a newspaper. To the dismay of my father it was published." He was a major in the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery.

If "life experience" is the stock in trade of the writer, Eaton has had long looks at large slices of life. Among other experiences was a stint as a war correspondent in World War II. Coverage of that conflict took her to 20 countries.

If her works reflect a philosophy of peace and harmony, how then does she react to the highly competitive world of publishing? "I left that rat race. That's not what I was writing for...The whole thing about writing; it's worship. A prayer goes into your work..."

Last week, ignoring if not flaunting her mid-'70's age, she was tooling around the country in the camper. At mid-week she was heading for Houston after lectures in Oklahoma, Dallas and points in the Bible Belt, pushing her book and her philosophies. She will wind up the tour in April to return to Independence where she shares a home with Concert Pianist Iren Marik. With her on the trip is neighbor-confidante Edith Newcomb. Her book profits go to Amer-Indian and Tibetan causes.



"Some say I'm making money out of the Indians...I'm not taking a cent...."

[illegible]

How to smoke without guilt - a book review by Jim Smith



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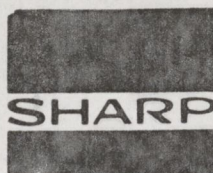
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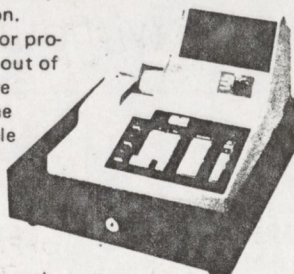
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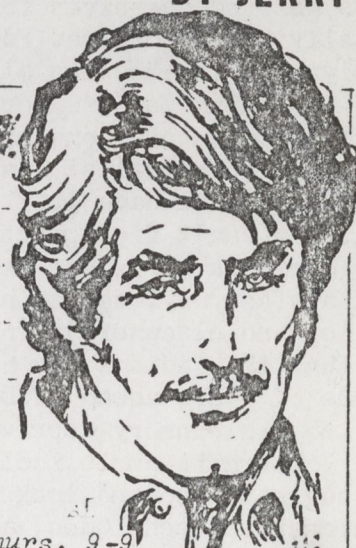
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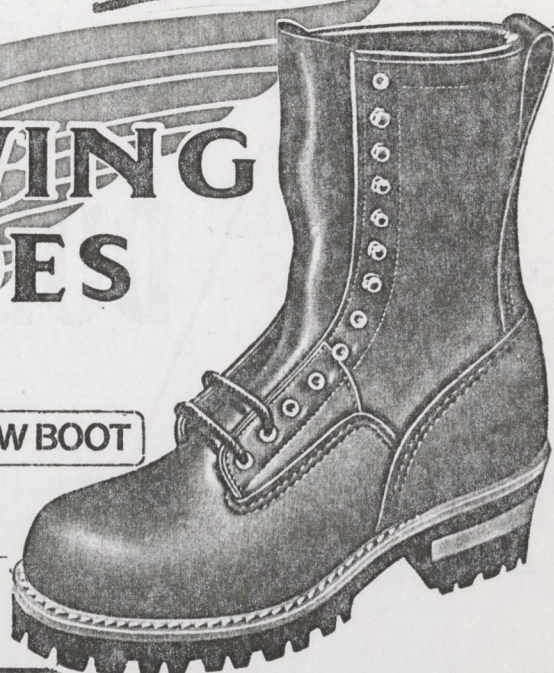
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REVIEW, Continued

survival over the last century...an example, I might add, that we might follow in saving our own embattled culture from the onslaught of materialism, inflation and the rest of the mess we find ourselves forced to deal with locally and otherwise. For, as Wendell Berry aptly said it, "We are all Redskins now."

Reading Eaton's account of the healing ceremonies one might conclude that the spiritualist healers of Manila and Brazil have little to offer that one can't find practically in his own back yard. Her experiences in Indian fasting lodges (in the Owens Valley and elsewhere), indicate strongly that the Indians may have been hundreds of years ahead of Dr. John Lilly and his sensory deprivation tanks.

There is ample indication here to suggest a second look at Indian therapeutic techniques, and likewise to suggest that maybe it's time we all took a more critical look at our own medical establishment.

There are thoughts of dance and of death, of culture conflicts. Progress, it seems, is not always uphill. "I Send A Voice" is not a book for everybody, but, paradoxically, as these things go, there is good reason for anyone who may read this review to also read the book. Although it is not "easy reading," it is first of all well and interestingly written and is therefore entertaining. Since it bears a message, it is also educational. When it is read through and set aside, it is not forgotten; because of this

it is therefore not merely time just whiled away, and something of it will walk with you. Last, but most surely not least, it may unravel for the reader an unfamiliar facet of life in this intricate valley.

Ms. Eaton makes the valley her home. The experiences she relates took place here. And these are not merely of the past; they happen now around us, unseen or unnoticed in our comings and goings in modern life.

The reader might find in Eaton's experiences lessons profitably learned for one's own improvement and understanding of the underlying structures that connect all faith in God and thus unite all people. As already mentioned, it makes little difference whether one can or cannot accept Eaton's experiences; the point is that the message of the Christ consciousness was always and is now universal, by whatever faith or path towards its attainment. It was and is a lesson for all people, regardless of race or any other categorization. It is, simply stated, a lesson of universal love and understanding. The author's experiences as metaphor stand as a measure of how well and how poorly this lesson has been learned and applied. It stands also as a measure of how far we have come as individuals and as a world - and how far we have yet to go. For details, read the book. I heartily recommend it. - JS.

(Reviewer Smith's own work has appeared in TIME-LIFE books, Newsweek, Esquire, New Times, other national publications. Associated with News-Letter, he now headquarters in Inyo.)



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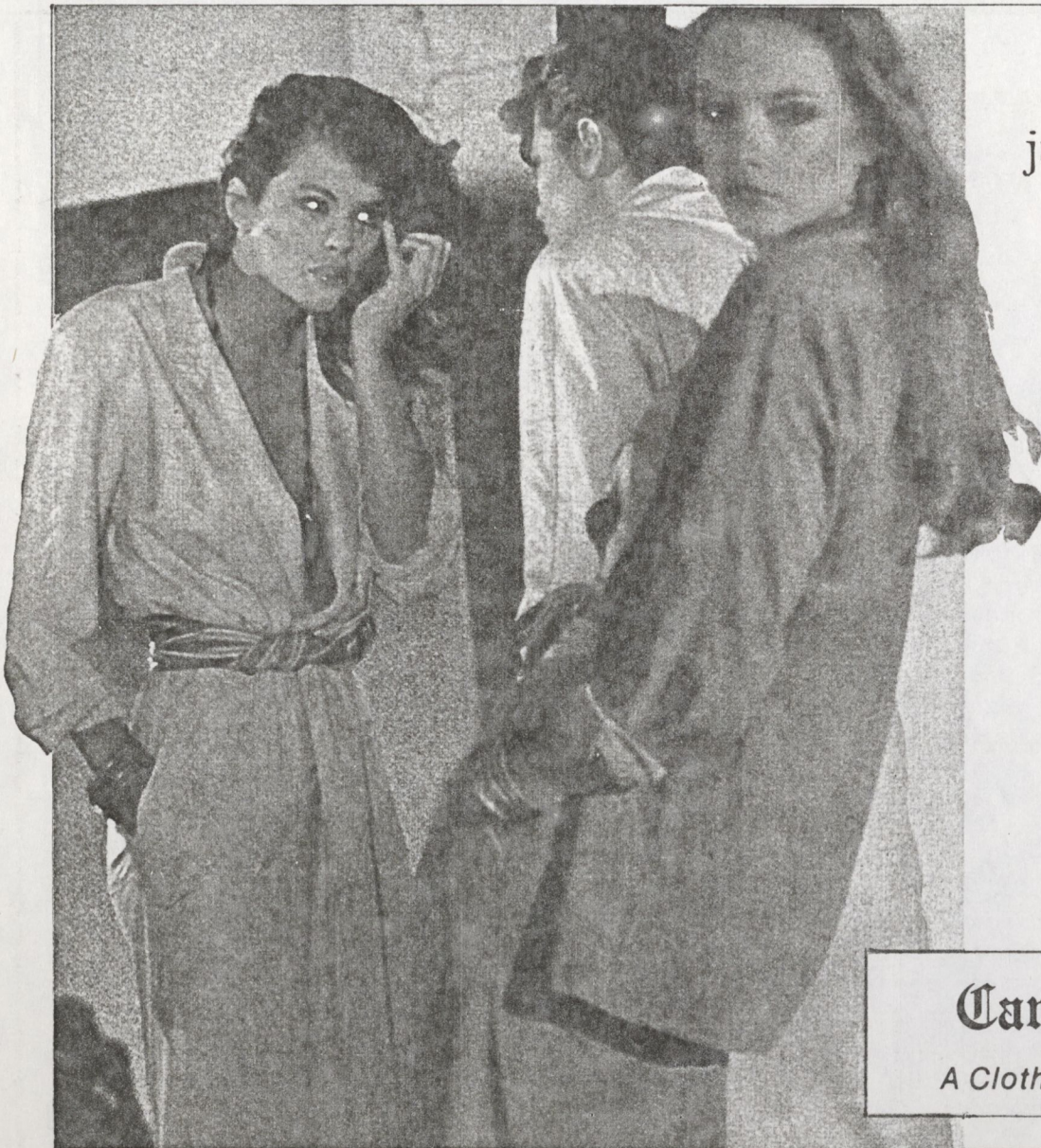
NEWS BRIEFS, Continued

unhappy, however, they are not getting much help - yet - from the board of supervisors who yet remain enchanted with the idea of a big new sewer link. It is an offer hard for them to refuse. But they may have some second thoughts; already, one of the supervisors, Wilma Muth, said for the record that chains such as MacDonald's tend to take money out of the county - leaving only their employees' salaries to go into the local economy. Argues Hitchborn, who last week met with "about 50" other Bishop restaurant owners in a private meeting at Best Western Motel: "The county thinks it's great to have a sewer, but the only money MacDonald's will leave is the salaries. The local population base is not building; there is no housing. And another thing: If MacDonald's doesn't make it here, it's the franchisee who will suffer." In that, Hitchborn may be right on: The MacDonald's chain is having increasing troubles - and at least one major lawsuit - in dealing with its franchisees. The chain is reported to be "moving in" on its own franchise buyers to enlarge its "company-owned" outlets. Some operators complain that MacDonald's franchises are becoming increasingly difficult to deal with, that the company foists upon them more and more demands for purchases - and control. As for the sewer offer, the supervisors are expecting a recommendation from the Eastern Sierra Community Services District that would manage it. Another complaint with chain operations - according to some who attended last week's meeting - is that the big chains purchase nearly all their goods from large outlets

while local wholesalers go begging. Another effect, regardless of philosophies about free competition lowering prices, the tendency is often the reverse: Sometimes merchants raise prices to compensate for lost volume. Hitchborn said he took an informal survey that showed a "12 to 19%" increase in prices since Burger King moved in. And what does the Bishop Chamber of Commerce have to say in the Big Mac issue? Denton Sonke, the chamber manager, allows as how "The chamber is not involved in repressing free enterprise. We discussed MacDonald's at board level, and we feel there is no real danger. But how do you make a decision on who comes to town and who doesn't?" The word from County Administrator John K. Smith was much stronger: "Guess who will make out like a burglar through it all: The Department of Water and Power." Why? DWP owns the land that would provide a sewer right-of-way. DWP will give it up - so long as the county doesn't assess them for the land; Just that much less taxes DWP will have to pay into county coffers. In spite of the alarms, however, it strongly is indicated that the Golden Arches will move in. It is, after all, a free and competitive world, and Mac's hopes to pick up about \$20,000 per month out of it. Bishop's current "growth" pattern is not without its predictable headaches. Since the chain seems determined to get its slice of the local market it may be as Supervisor Wilma Muth said: "Maybe we should just be happy they're willing to pay for the sewer."

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Candleberry Co.

A Clothing Store... And More



SPRING WAS ALL

Photos: Jim Smith

It was a good week for a lot of fun things, but...

IT WAS A TIME FOR FISHING...

Spring is a season that makes promises only lightly kept. At least that's the case in Inyo. But few here take seriously the rare weather enjoyed in the past glowing week; most people know, and the weather forecaster attests, that another cold spell is bound to follow.

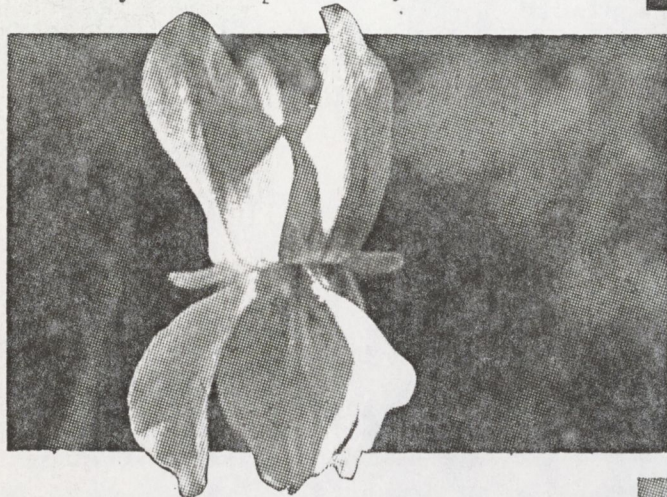
To bad, too. For last week the fruit trees put out some buds and Inyoans know about that: the late freeze, which very often strikes in April or even May, kills the fruit.

But for the optimists, it was a week



...FOR BLOOMING...

The violet at left, and the tiny yellow flower (about 3/16") of a weed were photographed with a macro lens and enlarged about 3 times.



of happy promise and practically everybody shed their down jackets, cut back on the (very expensive) home heating systems, and went outside for a sun experience. It was a long, cold winter.

News-Letter's Photographer Jim Smith found a spring beauty in the flowers shown here. With his repertoire of lens and enlargement tricks he magnified them many times.

Of the weather itself, there are some strong doubts. Says Wally Kennedy, the lady at the weather bureau: "It always happens this way, unfortunately. It is not here to stay. It's been above normal, but it will swing the other way." The forecast, roughly, is that the good weather may last "a few more days."

For over-eager gardeners, there was a word of warning from Tim Kelley of



...AND POLLINATING...

BUSTIN' OUT OVER!



Bishop Nursery: "We usually have a frost around the first of May...You can plant root stock now, potatoes, carrots, onions, turnips...and other plants can be started indoors. But be careful."

And in spring's melody there were other sour notes: the hum of mosquitoes. The county's mosquito abatement program, hard hit by Prop 13, is headed by Mike Faisy who is already getting complaints. Says Faisy: "There's nothing we can do." "It's the same thing every year."

But like a lover's promise, a promise of springtime after a hard winter is always nice to hear whether we believe it or not, or even if we've been stung before.

And of course it's always good for some pictures.



...FOR TAKING
CROSS-COUNTRY
BIKE RIDES
(AND FIXING
FLAT BIKE TIRES)



...FOR RESCUING
FALLEN BIRDS
FROM CATS...



...WALKING...



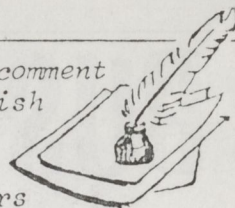
...GARDENING...



...AND JUST HORSING AROUND.

FORUM your view

The Inyo County News-Letter welcomes letters and comment relevant to current issues. The editors will publish here those views concisely stated and considered timely. Letters and statements should be address-



ed to PO Box 531, Independence 93526. The editors remind News-Letter's readers that publication of a letter on this page does not necessarily imply that the editors agree with its content, or that the editors guarantee accuracy of the letter.

SO WHERE WERE YOU WHEN WE NEEDED YOU?:
AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SUPERVISORS ON BLM
To Inyo Board of Supervisors
(Copy to media)

According to the article appearing in the Inyo Register of the Feb. 20 board meeting, Supervisor McDonald said, "It almost appeared that Washington DC has made up its mind what to do, and that the little folks in the rural area aren't going to have any effective say." My comment: He is so right.

Supervisor Muth: "The federal folks are just adding up numbers, and that little Inyo won't be able to come up with big numbers to match comments of those from big urban areas."

Supervisor Johnson said he had "testified at one BLM hearing and they didn't even take down my name." Tell us about it!

You "folks" are just realizing what we "little folks" have known for a long time, and you wouldn't listen to us then.

We became aware of public land closures, quite by accident, in 1972 when Nixon signed Executive Order 11644. Where were you?

You suggested we write letters to our congressmen. We wrote letters and attended meetings here and in Riverside and Bakersfield. We attended a peaceful demonstration of ORV's in Riverside in 1974, about 3000 strong. Did we get any publicity? Any attention? No, because it was "peaceful."

We saw about 500 letters from the environmentalists urging congressman Ketchum to close the Sand Dunes. There were only about 3 or 4 of ours. What happened to ours? Destroyed most likely.

Ketchum complied with the demands of the environmentalists with a news release just 2 weeks before we were reaching a decision to divide the Dunes, recommending that the Dunes "be closed immediately now and forever." And you supervisors agreed with Ketchum because it was the "political thing" to do. We have no one lobbying for us.

The Executive Order 11644 wasn't quite strong enough to suit the environmentalists as they wanted All the land. So they went to work and pressured the law makers to pass the "Endangered Species Act of 1973." This gave them the opportunity to go out and find all those so-called unique plants to protect - and the bugs and beetles. This really gave them clout.

Eventually, all the land will be closed, which is their goal.

The BLM and Forest Service were always giving lip service as to wanting public input when in fact I know personally they did not, and still don't.

They begrudgingly allowed me to attend all the meetings when the first Inter-Agency was set up in Bishop. Where were supervisors then?

Their representatives were hand-picked. There were 8 openings on this committee and I asked to represent one. No way. In fact, I was told I was not wanted. I would be most happy to tell who this person is.

At one of these meetings - either Dec., 1975, or Jan., 1976, chairman Ed Waldapfel of the Forest Service distributed copies of what he said was Executive Order 11644. On examining them we discovered they had been altered. I personally wrote and sent copies to Ketchum, to ORV officials, to federal judges, Dwayne Keyes in Fresno, to the U.S. Department of the Interior in San Francisco, Ralph G. Mihan, and to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in San Francisco, Wilbur Jennings. Nobody would touch it. Kept passing the buck. Ed Waldapfel was shipped off to Northern California, and Everett Towle left shortly after for Washington DC. I would be happy to show you these copies, if you are interested - of which I doubt.

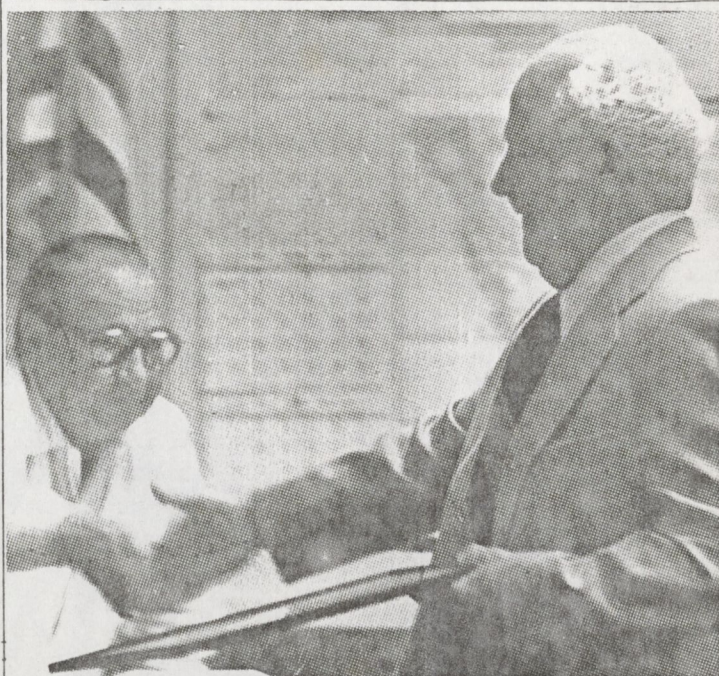
And you have the audacity to say to write letters. I ask you, who listens? What good does it do? As Supervisor McDonald said, their minds are already made up.

There is only one way this land closure can be stopped and that is to have your law makers rescind these laws they have passed. What chance do you think you have there?

Need I say more? I might add to refresh your memories that you surely are aware of the sad state of affairs the economy of our country is in and the main reason being that we are importing more goods than we are exporting. If all the land is closed to exploration of oil, minerals, etc., then the only alternative is to import all these goods. So, who is the loser?

I say more power to you if you want to take on the U.S. Government.

- Rheba Montrose
Bishop



Retired county school superintendent Mel Bernasconi's "resolution of commendation" arrived recently from Senator Walter Stiern and it was presented by the board of supervisors who offered their own congratulations. And what is the long-time superintendent doing in retirement? "Loafing."

Notes From B.K.



BENETT KESSLER

RUMOR CONFIRMED: That some of the original backers in the Ponderosa development (motel, bowling alley, condominium, etc.) at Bishop had backed out for reasons as yet unspecified but strongly indicating some behind-the-scenes controversy in the plan. One of the remaining promoters of the development firm, Merton Pond, told the Bishop City Council recently that the group had "reorganized" to build the new condo. Verified last week: that the "reorganization" excluded Radio Station Owner Frank Oxarart (KIBS) and his Station Manager John Young. "We're out, definitely," said Young, but declined to say why for the record. Oxarart and Young had been two of the big pushers for the project and it is they who released the first news about it. They had held some high hopes.

ALREADY BOOKED FOR A BISHOP APPEARANCE NEXT YEAR: The Los Angeles Opera Company. That's the word from Ellen Majors, new president of the Bishop Community Concerts Association. As planned the opera company will perform (We're not sure how) on the stage of the high school auditorium, which is kind of like hearing otherwise good music inside a giant Cheerios box. Acoustics or not, however, the association is doing its best, (The city auditorium is worse: That place is like the inside of a wash tub!) and has begun a new membership drive that will get underway in May. Meanwhile, the association is staging its last program of this season, a presentation of the California Boys Choir (Good reviews all over) in April.

AND WHILE WE'RE INTO THE CULTURE KICK, we'll call some attention (For some inexplicable reason she's never had very much coverage in the local media) to the upcoming concert by Pianist Iren Marik at her home at Independence. That's set for April 20. Marik, still adroit and powerful with her concert grand piano, will play Brahms, Schubert, Debussy and Chopin. She is in her 70's.

REMEMBER THAT INNOCENT LITTLE PRESS RELEASE OF A FEW MONTHS AGO? - The one about the apparently negligible increase that the power company will be tacking onto your light bill? The one that was supposed to lighten the load for the "average" homeowner and soak it to the big industrial users? So who's kidding who? Take a look at your power bill. More on that on other pages in this week's N-L. Pity now the home-owners who bought the big DWP pitch about "all-electric" homes some years back. The facts show that since 1969 electric bills have increased by 180% while gas bills have gone up only 55%....strong evidence that some strong regulatory control, maybe from PUC, is now getting to be an absolute necessity. And it is possible to do something about it: Floods of letters to the city council at L.A., the state assemblyman and state senator, and to the Public Utilities Commission itself. Keep the pressure on before DWP breaks us all.

MEANWHILE, WE HAVE WORD THAT A NUMBER OF DWP EXECS (Highest paid "city" executives in L.A.) have recently been given increased expense accounts - and some jazzy new autos.

IF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS NOT MAKING A LAND GRAB, then why is Uncle Sugar going into the hotel and restaurant (and bar, we might add) business in Death Valley? - And elsewhere? The feds recently bought Stovepipe Wells, and now we hear that at Yosemite, they've bought a hotel. Holders of other private properties in several national parks (Land and businesses that have operated for years), have been notified to sell out or face condemnation proceedings. The feds have about \$2 billion to spend for such purchases. Land, as the feds well know, is power. More powerful even than the vote sometimes.

I'M STILL SHUDDERING. Just viewed (on Channel 5) the production of *Scared Straight*, the film about a program to expose the hardcore juvenile delinquents to what life (Can one call it "life"?) is really like inside the Big House. If the statistics serve us truthfully, there is a strong indication that exposure to the really tough guys convinces a lot of the teenybopper amateurs that maybe it might be best after all to go home to Mommy and back to school, where they clearly belong. We're told that Bishop Police Chief Fred Coburn, lacking facilities to take the kids to a penitentiary, has acquired a copy of the film, and that he shows it around to any who have the intestinal fortitude (and detachment) to view it.

REPORTS HAD IT THAT THE DOC HAD PACKED UP AND HEADED FOR (Take your pick) Afghanistan, Hawaii, India, Europe, etc., etc. But the "fact" is (at last report) that Robert Marvan, a Bishop MD for some time, has done nothing more exotic than to return to school at Santa Barbara.

STILL MORE FILM CREWS HEADING FOR INYO. This week the news service will be hosting a PBS crew covering the water issue - and still another crew shooting a documentary on the same issue. Call it the lady's revenge, if you will; I've been encouraging and promoting these film-makers and producers to do these stories (that will be seen by millions), ever since DWP got me fired from a little radio broadcast (with only a few hundred listeners) three years ago. "Hell hath no fury like....."

BUT MAY THE NEWS IN YOUR DAY BE GOOD NEWS EVERY DAY..... - Sincerely,

BK



Vignette:

This was no "trial balloon" promotion the PR people at Coors were sending up; it was a real one. And that of course (of Coors?) required certain conditions - like no wind. The wind came up, but Coors Balloonist Nick Saum gamely tried to get it off the ground for the collection of news and television

cameramen gathered at Independence.

Up, up... and...
..almost

By the time they had the big bag out of its canvas cover (above), Saum and his helper, Coors Sales Representative Jerry Traurig, knew it would not work; too much wind. But they fired up the propane burner that generates even more hot air than an advertising gimmick, and - momentarily, at least - it swept Pilot Saum aloft.



Secured by ropes and local volunteers, Saum was dragged across the ground in the balloon's gondola. He quickly aborted the flight. A game try.



Photos: Jim Smith

eastern sierra news service

JOHN HESTON
BENETT KESSLER

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